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# Inside APHIS

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## ADC Uses Guard Dogs to Protect Sheep from Predators

For centuries, guarding dogs have been used in Europe to help shepherds protect their herds from attacks by wolves and other predators. Now, this old-world technique is being applied by the field staff of APHIS' Animal Damage Control.

ADC's Jeffrey S. Green, while a research wildlife biologist with the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), conducted studies showing that livestock guarding dogs help provide first-class protection against animal depredation in sheep flocks.

### Dog Breeds Developed

Over the years, breeds were developed based on their ability to protect flocks from outside damage. Among the breeds used today are the Great Pyrenees, Komondor, Akbash Dog, Anatolian Shepherd,

and Maremma. Today, they're being introduced into western U.S. sheep herds, in part through an ADC project designed to help selected livestock producers try a guarding dog in their operations. ADC has purchased about 100 of the dogs and placed them with sheep producers in Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

### Guard Dogs Support Other Methods

Jeff Green heads this project at the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, Id., and works with Roger Woodruff, a guarding dog specialist stationed in Bend, Ore. Together, they hope to orient ADC specialists on how guarding dogs work and how they can be used

(continued on page 24)



*Jeff Green of ADC (left) and cooperating sheep producer Brent Knight with "Rufus," a Great Pyrenees who is part of the ADC guarding dog project. (Photo courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service)*

## Confiscating Tons of Produce at the Mexican Border

Nobody knows precisely when fruit smuggling along the U.S.-Mexico border began, but Plant Protection and Quarantine officers in El Paso noticed increased smuggling in the mid-1980's. By 1988, it was out of control. In that year alone, border agencies intercepted over 78,000 pounds of fruit, vegetables and plants smuggled by illegal aliens into El Paso from Ciudad Juarez in Mexico.

According to John Vigil, PPQ's Officer in Charge in El Paso, Juarez receives more fruit and vegetables from Mexico's interior than any other border town, increasing the risk this border city's produce poses to U.S. crops. "The produce coming into Juarez concerns us," Vigil said, "because it comes from areas deep within Mexico where Mexican fruit flies and other harmful plant pests thrive."

Vigil said illegal aliens smuggle produce into El Paso because they can earn more money in the United States. "People of all ages—kids as young as eight—smuggle produce into El Paso. The most popular items are mangoes, limes and avocados, but we find potted plants, brooms and birds too."

Between 1984 and 1988, U.S. Border Patrol agents confiscated over 61 tons of prohibited agricultural products, and produce was still getting through. In late 1988, the El Paso office designed the first concerted attempt to crack down on fruit smugglers that made them think twice about crossing the Rio Grande with prohibited produce.

PPQ launched the first of four "busts," or Fruit Interception Operations (FIO), in April 1989. PPQ border supervisors teamed up with off-duty U.S. Border Patrol agents and canvassed the levy-border area in trucks, using two-way radios with other teams.

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# "Operation Jumpstart" Prepares Clericals to "Step Up" for APHIS Secretarial Careers

In most government agencies, top-notch secretaries and clerk-typists are in constant demand. APHIS is no exception, but thanks to a program called "Operation Jumpstart," now a part of Recruitment and Development, the agency is getting better-trained clerical employees—and may retain them longer.

"Jumpstart" began as a pilot program in June 1988 by the Human Resources Division, according to Rosemary Witcoff, personnel management specialist who served for a period as program manager and assisted in its development. Consisting of recruitment, hiring, training and placement, the program is designed to improve the quality of clerical support in APHIS and give new employees an incentive to remain with the agency.

"When we first began designing the program, we surveyed our clerical work force and realized that the main reason given for accepting employment with APHIS was location—being close to home," says Witcoff. "So we decided to recruit candidates from high schools, colleges, and community organizations in the Hyattsville area.

"Out of about 30 applicants, eight were chosen for the first class. We're now working with our fifth group of students."

## Training and Mentors Shape Futures

According to program coordinator Linda Story, the eight employees participating in each seven-week session receive intensive training on the PRIME wordprocessor, Telemail, telephone techniques, correspondence and style, proofreading, and any other training that will enhance their ability to do a good job when placed.

After completing the seven-week session, trainees are sent on 30-day temporary duty assignments throughout the agency headquarters, which give them a chance to test their skills and see if they like working in a particular APHIS office.

The seven-week training session and the 30-day assignments are paid clerk-typist positions at grade levels 2 through 4, depending on previous job experience.

Witcoff says mentors play an important part in the Jumpstart program. Top-level APHIS secretaries from the APHIS Secretarial Advisory Council (SAC) serve as role models for the trainees, providing them with "shadowing" assignments in which the students may observe their daily duties. The secretaries also provide career counseling and give trainees an orientation to APHIS.

## Specialized Placement Aids Retention

"Operation Jumpstart" is marketed as a free training course, with no guarantee of employment," says Elaine Gilbert, the plan's new program manager. "However, we do tell the students they will be given full consideration for job vacancies.

"We try to place trainees in positions where they can best utilize all their skills," she adds. "We also discuss career planning with the hiring officials, rather than risk losing the trainees once we've trained them." So far, the program has had 100 percent placement of the first four classes.

## Graduates Respond Favorably

"Jumpstart helped acquaint me with APHIS," says Alicia Ferguson, a program graduate who's now a staff secretary with International Services. "The program was interesting and I learned a great deal from the training."

"I loved it!" says Kathy Conner, a clerk-typist with Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care and former Jumpstart trainee. "The instructors were very good—I would recommend the program to anyone."

-Cleopatra Robinson

Operation Jumpstart's early graduates with R&D coordinators. First row: Michelle Proctor, Angela Kelly, Linda Story (R&D), Rosemary Witcoff (HRD), Alicia Ferguson, Carrie Mack. Second row: Eleanor Speelman, Cheryl Odom, LaVonne Marshall, Debbie Small, Kathleen Conner, Audrey Kowmas, Kristina Frank, Marian Sampson, Melanie Nicol. (Photo by Anita McGrady)



# Import Center Welcomes Four-Legged Passengers from China



After years of negotiations between China and the United States, including efforts that resulted in a Superior Service award this year for Senior Staff Veterinarian George Winegar (see p. 20), USDA has finally imported Chinese pigs for genetic research. The swine represent three unique breeds—Ming, Fengjing and Meishan—found only in China. The pigs were placed in APHIS' Harry S Truman Animal Import Center in Key West when they first arrived in the country, according to David Herrick of the VS Import-Export Staff. Herrick said the pigs were in isolation for 60 days in China and met certain health requirements established by both countries before they were imported. The animals were released in July to USDA's Agricultural Research Service, Iowa State University, and the University of Illinois, which will conduct cooperative research with them to improve the productivity of U.S. swine. The Chinese pigs produce large litters and are reputed to be resistant to disease, according to Herrick.

-Marlene Stinson

## Vet Training Courses Held at NVSL

Whether state, federal or even military, many veterinarians have benefited from training courses offered at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa.

NVSL as it now exists was formed in 1973, joining the formerly separate diagnostics and biologics laboratories. Once part of Veterinary Services, NVSL now is a part of Science and Technology.

### Courses Offer Variety of Topics

According to NVSL Director Robert Nervig, "We work with the Recruitment and Development staff to coordinate the training courses. Courses are offered on topics such as brucellosis, tuberculosis, pseudorabies and foreign animal diseases. Our facility is ideal for the trainees because it allows them to work in a laboratory setting."

The names of prospective course participants are submitted by each Area Veterinarian in

charge, according to Marilyn Hagemoser, NVSL training technician.

"Many of them are VS people, while others are state veterinarians who work closely with APHIS," Hagemoser says. "For some courses, we'll even see veterinarians from foreign countries."

### Designing, Planning, Evaluating

Alwynelle Ahl, head of R&D's Professional Development Coordination and Planning staff, says her group works closely with program staffs to design each course.

"For example, we work with VS Emergency Programs in setting up the Foreign Animal Diseases (FAD) course," Ahl says. "This includes selecting the instructors and developing course outlines."

"We also serve as evaluators once the course is finished, which helps us in planning the next one."

### Hands-On Experience

According to Hagemoser, the FAD course is the largest in terms of the

amount of material and length of time it covers, and is limited to about 20 attendees. It involves a good deal of hands-on laboratory work. Other courses, which may include more lectures and less time in the laboratory, can hold as many as 45 people.

"Our instructors are usually VS personnel," says Ahl. "In the case of the FAD course, we try to have one experienced field person for every four students. The last day at Ames is generally a practice session where participants have a chance to review what they've learned."

### Team Effort

Adds Ahl, "The beauty of these courses is that they give people in the field, at the laboratory and in Hyattsville a chance to work together. Each has a part to play and contributes something unique to the process."

-Caree Lawrence

# Letters to Inside

Dear Readers:

Keep the letters coming (also ideas for stories and photos). As space permits, we will print all signed letters, but we reserve the right to edit or rewrite for reasons of space and style. The editor or an APHIS official will answer letters requiring responses. Although we appreciate all submissions, we cannot guarantee that they will be returned.

Dear *Inside APHIS*:

I recently heard of the death of retired veterinarian Dale Suplee, who was always proud of his association with APHIS.

Suplee, who died late last year after a long illness, served with USDA for 37 years. In 1971 he retired from the Veterinary Services office in Albany, N.Y., where he had served as Veterinarian in Charge for 11 years. Before going to Albany, he served as AVIC in Helena, Mont., for three years.

During his career, Suplee held posts in Olympia, Wash., Charleston, W.V., Boise, Id., and Fort Worth, Tex. Earlier, he served as supervisor for two years at the USDA Animal Disease Research Center in Beltsville, Md.

Suplee obtained his veterinary degree from Kansas State University at Manhattan in 1932. He began his USDA career as a temporary employee sent to work in the drought-stricken area of Deaf Smith County, Tex. He was permanently appointed in 1936. Suplee is survived by his wife of 51 years, Fern, and two sons, Curtis and Michael.

Billy G. Johnson

Associate Deputy Administrator  
Veterinary Services

Dear *Inside*,

Lisa Glenn, one of our veterinarians on the National Animal Health Monitoring Staff (NAHMS), saved a man's life using cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). She was attending a concert in Baltimore February 23 when an elderly man collapsed in the theater's lobby.

Lisa performed rescue breathing and chest compressions for about 15 minutes before rescue person-

nel arrived. The paramedics and emergency room staff at the local hospital agree that Lisa's swift action saved the man's life.

Although certified in CPR several years ago, Lisa credits her feat to a refresher course in CPR she took last December. The course was provided by the National Center for Animal Health Information Systems and taught by an instructor from the local community college. To date, 25 employees of NCAHIS and NAHMS have completed the course. It has proven to be money well spent, as evidenced by this incident.

We in NAHMS are very proud of Lisa's quick response to a life-threatening situation.

Sincerely,

William D. Hueston  
Chief Staff Veterinarian, NAHMS  
Fort Collins, Colorado

We add our congratulations to those of Lisa's co-workers! May we also encourage the many APHIS employees who have not taken a CPR class to reconsider? Just a few hours of your time could mean a lifetime to someone else.

- Editor

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The following poem was written by Dee Canderia, secretary at the Northeastern Regional Office in Moorestown, N.J., and submitted by regional director James Lee:

## Beagle Brigade

A little sniff, a little snort, And suddenly they pull up short, They wag their tails and sit right down, They do their job without a sound.

A lemon here, an orange there, A piece of meat, they just don't care, They do their job and do it well, And all it takes is a little smell.

Who are the guys I speak of here? Who check the traveler from far and near? These are our helpers who don't get paid, Our little friends of the Beagle Brigade.

Dear *Inside APHIS*:

APHIS had another of its finest hours on the evening of September 11, 1989, when it honored Dr. Saul Wilson at his retirement party. APHIS and its employees have a lot to be proud of in their history of accomplishments in animal health. On this night they were adding another one in human relations. There was standing room only at the ceremony, which shows the numerous friends that Dr. Wilson has made over the years.

A guesstimate on my part was that the audience consisted of about 70 percent white and 30 percent black or Afro-American. For over an hour, one speaker after another used glowing terms to describe their favorable associations with Dr. Wilson and his accomplishments. It's not unusual to have such acknowledgements at a retirement party. What was different in this particular case was that Dr. Wilson accomplished these feats during the turbulent Sixties and even, in some cases, up until today.

It became obvious to me that we were honoring a person for how he successfully handled most of the major challenges he faced in his

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## Inside APHIS

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Call or write the editor with ideas for the next issue by March 15, 1990.

Director

John P. Duncan III

Editors

Peggy Adams  
Caree Lawrence

Designer

Mary Ann Hines

Photography Editor

Anita McGrady

career while our country was first addressing its racial problems. In fact, I got the feeling that no one there even cared or thought about his color; it was the person that mattered.

It was a warm and thought-provoking experience that many of us who were there won't forget. Hopefully, as time goes by, conditions in our country will continue to change so that such opportunities for all minority groups will be commonplace rather than unusual.

At the ceremony, APHIS announced that they were establishing a scholarship fund for minorities at Tuskegee Institute and that Dr. Wilson will participate in its implementation as a faculty member there. Dr. Wilson will be able to provide excellent counseling to recipients of the scholarships based on his personal experience. They will be fortunate to have such a mentor.

Congratulations are in order for both Dr. Wilson and APHIS on a job well done.

Frank Mulhern, D.V.M.  
Former Administrator  
APHIS

*Editor's Note: We're sorry the lists of retirements and deaths that customarily appear in Inside APHIS could not be included this time because of computer problems. They will be resumed in the next issue.*

## Bill Helms Retires



## The New Inside APHIS

by John P. Duncan III  
Director, Legislative &  
Public Affairs

When the last issue of *Inside APHIS* came out at the end of 1988, APHIS had just undergone its most significant restructuring in 16 years. By now, the newly structured units have had a chance to organize, conduct strategic planning, and settle down to fulfill their new and traditional missions.

Both the restructuring and the strategic planning process pointed out the need for improved internal communications. More than ever before, when people outside the Agency approach any one of us, they expect us to represent APHIS as a whole, not just our own program area. Therefore, to represent APHIS as educated employees, PPQ people need to know about the most important issues in IS, VS, ADC, REAC, and other areas. Similarly, people in these program areas need to know if Medfly has cropped up in California, if a country has started new exports to the U.S., about regulations on baits for controlling animal damage, and so forth.

To further the goal of ensuring that APHIS employees are

well-informed about our agency, we have established a new vehicle, *All Around APHIS*, to communicate fast-breaking news of general interest. We hope everyone is receiving this biweekly electronic newsletter, and we welcome your suggestions. We have a new editor, Peggy Adams, who is also the editor of *Inside APHIS*. She is most interested in hearing from you.

Even though *All Around APHIS* touches everyone on a continuing basis, *Inside APHIS* remains a vital tool, and we have spent considerable time since the last issue in discussing its future role.

Hereafter, *Inside APHIS* will be published twice a year. You will be seeing more and more feature stories and photos, along with think-pieces on complex policy and program issues, which help to create a sense of cohesiveness. Each issue will help serve as a reminder that, in spite of our diverse roles, we in APHIS have a great deal in common as we work to protect American agriculture and the health and safety of our food supply.

William F. "Bill" Helms, deputy administrator of PPQ, retired early in December after 30 years of service to USDA and the agriculture industry. Helms was born and grew up in Alabama, and graduated from Auburn University in 1956 with a degree in wildlife management. Following two years of military service, he joined the Agricultural Research Service's Plant Pest Control Division, a forerunner of PPQ.

Helms served in several duty stations in Alabama, Mississippi and Texas before moving to headquarters in 1976. He became Associate Deputy Administrator in 1980 and Deputy Administrator in 1986.

Among his accomplishments, Helms was selected to head the Management Review Group whose deliberations culminated in the 1988 APHIS reorganization. His most satisfying contribution, however, may be the relationships he developed with industry, according to Acting Deputy Administrator Dick Backus.

"Bill became PPQ's major player in dealing with industry," Backus said. "He developed a great network with industry leaders. He earned their respect and made them feel they had someone who would really listen to their concerns."

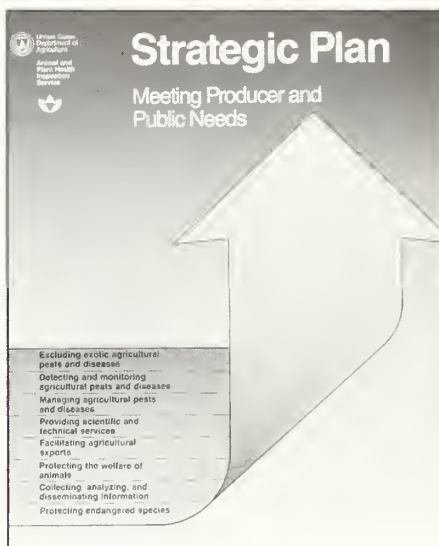
# Strategic Planning: A First for APHIS

When the APHIS Management Review Group recommended strategic planning to help remedy a lack of clarity and direction in the agency and its programs, few employees knew the meaning of the term. Now, a year-and-a-half later, many have actually taken part in the process. And all employees should have received copies of the Agency strategic plan and, shortly, plans for their own program areas.

"Fortune 500 companies have been planning strategically since the 1960's and 1970's, but most Federal agencies still haven't progressed to that point," said Ed Thomas, PPD, who coordinated the APHIS-wide effort. "The process was new to almost everyone who took part and I've been very much impressed with their dedication."

"I see this as the single most important management event in APHIS since it was created in the early 1970's," Thomas said. "We've had critical examinations of individual programs many times but never of the Agency as a whole."

In intensive work sessions held off-site, the APHIS Management Team examined the Agency in light



of its mandates. Then they developed and delineated, in turn, a mission statement, critical issues, an agency strategy, goals, and action plans. The plan was finalized, and distribution to each employee and to stakeholders took place in September.

Meanwhile, individual program areas went through the same process.

"This was particularly important to the new units," Thomas said. "They underwent self-examination at a particularly crucial time in their development."

Themes running through many of the individual plans relate to employee development and technology.

Now that a plan is in place, can it be changed?

"Certainly—and it should be," said Thomas. "The APHIS Management Team plans to spend one day per quarter examining the plan and reviewing progress. In addition, some time will be set aside annually for a more formal updating process."

Some skepticism remains about whether the plan will really make a difference.

"I don't blame people for being skeptical at this point," Thomas said. "They want to see results. This will take a while. I only ask that people read the plans and be familiar with their contents. In time, I'm confident that almost everyone will agree that the time and resources were well spent."

- Betsy Adams

## PPQ at the Port of Savannah Computerized with "COBRA"

To most people, the word "cobra" brings to mind a highly venomous snake that can flatten its neck into a hood when threatened, making it appear even more menacing to its enemies.

But PPQ officers at the port of Savannah deal with a "cobra" every day—and it's a much friendlier sort of animal. Their COBRA is a computer system which stands for Customs On-line with Brokers for Rapid Action, and it makes the task of cargo clearance a lot easier.

### User-Friendly COBRA

"COBRA is a practically paperless way to keep track of incoming cargo," says Savannah Officer in Charge Arthur Miller. "It gives us the ability to issue hold orders for certain vessels that need inspection, and to transmit emergency action orders for fumigation and treatment—all by computer!"

Assistant OIC David Holman says the system, which is coordinated by the Georgia Port Authority, has moved the port of Savannah ahead of others nationwide in terms of control and access to cargo.

"We very rarely have cargo 'escape' from us anymore," Holman says. "With COBRA, we can place a shipment on hold knowing that the computer will keep it on hold until it's been cleared. It's given us greater security in keeping track of containers."

### System Keeps Growing

According to PPQ Officer Joe Kennebrew, the port first joined the COBRA network in 1987, teaming up with U.S. Customs and the Georgia Port Authority. The system is continually being upgraded and expanded. A more recent "member" is the Food and Drug Administration office in Atlanta.

Kennebrew and his fellow officers take turns working at the Container Port managed by the Georgia Port Authority. There, they receive manifests—that is, lists of cargo on each ship—from all the shipping lines.

### Inspecting Shipments

"The Port Authority automatically holds all cargo on ships entering the port, and the officer on duty reviews the manifests and decides which cargo should be held for inspection," says Kennebrew. "Then we enter the hold orders directly into COBRA."

Once the cargo has been inspected for soil contamination, snails, Khapra beetles, and other pests, a release order is issued through COBRA. The system gives PPQ a complete record of every cargo shipment from the time it enters the port until it's been

# APHIS Kids Strive for Excellence

Living overseas can make learning an unusually challenging experience. While thousands of children of Foreign Service officers attend schools around the world, making new friends and adjusting to a new culture and environment every few years can complicate life for the average teenager.

Most Foreign Service dependents balance these constant changes and their schoolwork, but some have done more than balance; they've excelled with honors. Last May, two children of APHIS International Services employees were awarded Merit Awards and Financial Aid Grants by the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) in cooperation with the Association of American Foreign Service Women (AAFSW).

## Two Students Win Recognition

Brian Coan, son of Rod and Joan Coan, (Nassau, Bahamas) received a \$500 Merit Award for his academic achievement and leadership at the American School at The Hague, Holland. Brian is now attending Williams College and plans to study philosophy and political science.

Malama Chock, daughter of Alvin and Yona Chock (Hyattsville, Maryland), also graduated from the



Brian Coan



Malama Chock

American School in The Hague. She was awarded the Selden Chapin Memorial Scholarship. Malama is finishing her freshman year at Drexel University where she studies civil engineering.

## Associations Sponsor Awards

Each year AFSA and AAFSW sponsor two scholarship programs for Foreign Service dependents. The scholarships are available to graduating high school students who have demonstrated academic excellence and outstanding leadership during their four years of high school.

The Financial Aid Grants are awarded each fall to full-time undergraduates studying in the United States and are based solely on need.

Hundreds of students are eligible for these scholarships, but only a fraction of them actually apply. All eligible students are encouraged to apply. Applications for the 1990-1991 academic year became available in October. Write to: AFSA Scholarship Programs Administrator, 2101 E Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037; telephone (202) 338-4046.

-Janna Evans

released—and retains that record for up to 60 days.

"Our treatment procedures are also entered in COBRA, and each has a number," says officer Sara Slaughter. "If pests are detected in a container, we can key in the number and COBRA will automatically bring up the correct fumigation or washing procedure. This saves us a lot of time and energy by putting the information we need right at our fingertips."

## Cooperative Effort

All the Savannah officers stress that the key to COBRA's success is the teamwork between the Georgia Port Authority and PPQ. "We've had outstanding cooperation from the Port Authority," says Miller. "They and their system have really helped us improve the way we perform our cargo clearance duties."

-Caree Lawrence

# Going Beyond the Call of Duty

APHIS employees who were stationed in Panama City confronted and worked through the political and economic strife in that country each day.

Enduring those hardships while fulfilling APHIS' objectives earned six International Services employees in Panama City special recognition. U.S. Ambassador Arthur Davis last year presented the State Department's Superior Service award to Jim Cavanaugh, Rafael Garcia, Keith Hand, Floyd Jones, Felix Reta and Beatriz Diaz, and to all members of the U.S. Mission in Panama.

The award read: "For sustained superior performance with unfailing effort and dignity, in the highest tradition of the Foreign

Service, under conditions of duress and degradation of quality of life, both professional and personal, throughout the June 1987 to June 1988 political, economic and social crisis in the Republic of Panama."

"Though we are no longer in Panama, receiving the awards from State was a welcome boost to morale," said Jim Cavanaugh, APHIS Regional Veterinary Representative for Central America, Panama and Colombia.

"I am extremely proud of all the APHIS employees and their families stationed here in Panama for their dedication and hard work under most difficult circumstances and while facing constant stress and uncertainty."

-Janna Evans

# Taking the Broad View

"I like to see results," says Bob Melland, Confidential Assistant to the Administrator.

Mellan came to this position in July after years of experience in state and Federal agencies, most recently as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Inspection Services.

"While I was in the Assistant Secretary's office," he says, "I watched the APHIS management review team give the agency an internal review and structure its organization. Now I have the privilege of participating on the inside as the strategic plans are being published and implemented.

## Time for Action

"This kind of planning is essential," he continues, "but we're now at the point where we need to move toward actual achievement of the goals outlined in the strategic plans.

"Within APHIS, we need to establish priorities, deal with those programs and issues that are highest priorities, and complete them," Melland says. "We need to state our expected moment of completion in everything we undertake—for example, in eradication programs for pests and diseases.

"With some pests and diseases, such as salmonella, we may not have eradication as a goal, but we still need benchmarks to indicate when we have achieved our goals in control and prevention."

Mellan's management expertise stems in part from his work as North Dakota's Director of Management and Budget in 1982 and 1983. He believes that priority-setting is all-important, not only for getting the job done but also as a budgeting aid.

"Priorities need to be reflected in the budget on a year-to-year

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**"Sequestration means that we would have to do everything part way. APHIS' goal should be to finish everything, in its proper time and sequence."**

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*Mellan's first exposure to agriculture was in the farm equipment business in the Dakotas and Colorado. Later, while campaigning for congressional and senatorial seats with the North Dakota legislature, Melland could assure farmers that people in the farm equipment business were more dependent on agriculture than the farmers themselves. "When they had bountiful crops they spent their money and we prospered. When they did not have bountiful crops, we suffered even more than they did. I'm well aware that small businesses in rural areas are dependent on agriculture."*

basis," he says. "That is, you set your objectives; you meet them; you quit; you go on to the next.

"This is really a budget device, and it can help us avoid some of the most troublesome consequences of sequestration of funds from the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law. Sequestration means that we would have to do everything part way," Melland explains. "APHIS' goal should be to finish everything, in its proper time and sequence."

## APHIS Is Unique

Mellan enjoys taking part in APHIS' wide-ranging missions. He describes the agency as unique.

"APHIS has diverse but parallel regulatory interests in domestic and international agriculture, for both

plants and animals. No other agricultural agency undertakes such a broad and comprehensive role. And the demands of these interests call for a great deal of technical expertise.

"But APHIS has much in common with a complex corporation,"

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**"We need to have our science ahead of the curve, to provide leadership to restore scientific literacy in this country."**

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"Within APHIS, we need to establish priorities, deal with those programs and issues that are highest priorities, and complete them."

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he says. "It has a large, complex budget; and its budget preparation and review is an entity unto itself. The same is true for personnel and operational management.

"So APHIS not only has veterinarians, wildlife biologists and entomologists, but also professionals in the business disciplines," Melland says. "The agency is broad-ranging not only in its mission but in the mix of people in it. In this sense it is incomparable."

### **APHIS Stakeholders**

One of Melland's chief duties as Confidential Assistant is to develop and maintain linkages with APHIS' stakeholders.

"I'm not sure we've inventoried all the people that APHIS serves," he says. "APHIS has stakeholders everywhere. I think we need to be more aggressive in identifying them.

"I see this as a study in government catching up to its constituencies. That is, APHIS needs to identify the needs of the people we serve and make their missions our mission. As Dr. Glosser has often said, we must be a service agency, not just a regulatory agency.

"Certainly, we already do this well, in many areas," he says. "There's a comfortable, almost personal relationship between our field staff and those we serve. It allows APHIS to offer farm producers and the large agricultural industry a comfortable way to deal with government."

### **The Food Safety Issue**

While in the Assistant Secretary's office, Melland became involved in the emerging issue of food safety.

"I've had the unique experience of watching the agricultural community change its minds on food safety, from not wanting to talk about it to actually using it to market their products," he says.

"Our food safety role in APHIS is to assist agricultural producers in creating a healthy, safe, quality product before it goes to the marketplace. You could say that APHIS has the first responsibility, one we share with the Agricultural Research Service."

Mlland believes APHIS must consider consumers, as well as producers, to be stakeholders.

"Consumers are challenging agriculture on every level," he says. "Take the alar scare, BST, and others. Consumers are being encouraged to believe that any product that is initiated by people and scientifically presented is somehow unnatural.

"Well, that's not true, but the consumer activists are presenting a stronger case than we are. We have to catch up with them and then get ahead of them.

"We need to help Americans recognize that APHIS and USDA and the government as a whole, in cooperation with producers, processors, marketers, and others in the agricultural chain, provide the safest, soundest food supply in the world.

"We need to have our science ahead of the curve, to provide leadership to restore scientific literacy in this country. We're ahead in scientific technology, safety and protection; but we're not ahead in explaining our role to the public.

"We need the help of educators, in science and chemistry and sociology classes. APHIS could help by supplying background, resources and encouragement," he says.

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**"I've had the unique experience of watching the agricultural community change its mind on food safety, from not wanting to talk about it to actually using it to market its products."**

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"Since we are involved both in animal welfare and animal damage control, our missions may seem contradictory, but actually they are not. Our broader mission is protecting the health and welfare of the American public and animal and plant life."

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### **Animal Welfare Stakeholders**

Mlland believes the same is true on the animal welfare issue.

"We believe that our veterinarians entered the profession through their concern and appreciation for animals. But we don't communicate that, so the activists think we are the defenders of a few bad practices among the people we regulate. Again, the solution is to improve the scientific literacy of the public," he says.

"Since we are involved both in animal welfare and animal damage control, our missions may seem contradictory, but actually they are not. Our broader mission is protecting the health and welfare of the American public and animal and plant life.

"In carrying this out, we make conscious judgments in the broad context of an ecologically and environmentally sound, balanced, natural way of doing things. I think our broad mission is to maintain a balance.

"There is the story of two bricklayers who were working together. When the first was asked, 'What are you doing?' he responded, 'I'm laying brick.' When the other was asked, he said, 'I'm building a cathedral.'

"I suppose in APHIS," said Melland, "when we are asked what we are doing, we can say, simplistically, 'I kill coyotes,' or take the broader view and say, 'I help maintain the balance of nature.'"

# Biological Control Celebrates 100 Years



Students from the Van Ness Elementary School in Washington carefully feel the spines on musk thistle, a North American weed, and examine musk thistle weevils, industrious insects that feed on it, while Stephen D. Hight, ARS Entomologist, explains how biocontrol works. The students were attending an APHIS ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of biocontrol—the use of an organism that is the natural enemy of an agricultural pest to control damage from the pest naturally. At the ceremony APHIS Administrator James Glosner announced the formal end of a 10-year APHIS campaign using a stingless wasp, smaller than the fingernail on the pinky of a newborn baby, to attack alfalfa weevils. The "hands-on" media event allowed the children to "hear" through a speaker the crunching sound made by rice weevils attacking a bin of stored grain and to watch a container full of fast-growing waterweeds and a tankful of imported Asian fish (white amurs, see story, p. 22) that fed on the waterweeds. (Photo by Anita McGrady)

-Amichai Heppner

## Regulatory Enforcement Goes Automated

Regulatory Enforcement (RE), part of the Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care (REAC) staff, recently entered the modern age of automation with a new computer system that gives users immediate information on APHIS program violations.

The new system, called the Compliance Investigation Tracking System (CITS), ties RE staff, RE investigators and the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) to an extensive database.

In its service to VS, PPQ, BBEP and Animal Care, RE investigates and pursues prosecution of violators of federal regulations concerning animals and plants when other compliance efforts fail. An average of 850 cases are submitted to RE for prosecution each year.

### Customized Computer System

In 1986, RE decided to establish a national "tracking" system to better connect field investigators with current information on compliance violations. At RE's request, APHIS' National Center for Animal Health Information Systems (NCAHIS) in Fort Collins, Colo.,

created a customized computer system that allows interaction both into and from the database.

RE forecasts that by 1999, CITS will have saved APHIS about \$7.4 million.

"The time spent gathering information is very costly," says Arthur J. ("Skip") Wilson, Assistant Deputy Administrator for Regulatory Enforcement. "CITS will reduce this cost by providing immediate, up-to-date information to all who need it."

### Cases Readily Updated

According to Wilson, the system allows constant updating of each case by the investigators and staff members involved. At the same time, all historical data will be maintained, including the original information entered when the case was opened.

"This capability offers additional benefits that have been previously unavailable," says Wilson. "The system will provide an accurate source of information about violations in each program serviced. Analysis of this information should help each program determine what sanctions, penalties or other actions have been most effective in deterring violators."

According to Wilson, data provided by CITS can be used by RE to determine in which regions the programs need to place greater emphasis on enforcement to obtain compliance with the laws and regulations.

### Field Access Made Easy

"Another plus of the system is that field investigators can access it and get the latest case information just as easily as the staff in Hyattsville," says Wilson.

The advent of CITS marks the closing chapter in an epic of incomplete card files, manual log books and outdated filing systems.

"Having 24-hour data entry, retrieval and update nationwide improves our ability to categorize and analyze cases and recommend actions," says Wilson. "We might also reduce the number of legal actions currently overwhelming OGC."

Wilson says cooperation with Veterinary Services has been essential to the system's success. Since RE owns only 25 personal computers, many VS area offices provide the use of their equipment to field investigators using CITS.

(continued on page 24)

# Animal Care: Reaching the Briny Blue

When one thinks of animal care, domesticated dogs and cats spring to mind. But what about marine mammals like dolphins, whales, seals, manatees and polar bears?

That question was the focus of a six-day marine mammal training course that recently took place in Orlando, Fla. Organized by the Marine Mammal Commission, the course followed a unique path in instructing marine mammal inspectors.

## Back to Basics

"We wanted to get back to basics," said Recruitment & Development's course coordinator John Coakley. "Instead of spending a lot of time reviewing standards, we focused on basic marine mammal husbandry. Evaluating the factors that affect the quality of life for marine animals helps inspectors determine which facilities are complying with humane standards and which are not."

Several instructors from both industry and academia lectured on the quality of care received by

marine mammals in man-made environments. The topics of discussion included water quality and temperature, fish quality, cleanliness of tanks and surrounding areas, vitamin supplements, and animal transport. Scientific discussions on anatomy, physiology, identification of marine mammals and their behavior were also held. "Mock inspections" conducted at Sea World and Marine Land offered participants hands-on, practical application of the husbandry techniques they learned.

## Productive Learning Environment

The three primary instructors, William Medway, Joseph Geraci and Sam Ridgeway, are among the most highly accomplished and respected veterinarians in the marine mammal field.

"The course was a popular and technical success, thanks to the combined talents of the instructors," Coakley said. "Their enthusiasm for and understanding of marine mammals created the

perfect atmosphere in which to learn."

Coakley added that a lot of credit goes to the Marine Mammal Commission for its role in coordinating the course and its agenda. "The Commission's support and insight were instrumental to the success of the course," he said.

According to Coakley, 16 of the 28 course participants were from APHIS, while others were employees from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Florida's Department of Natural Resources, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Marine Mammal Commission.

## Invaluable Experience

APHIS inspector Kristina Cox had high praise for the seminar. "Marine mammal inspectors should not miss this course; it's indispensable to our work," she said. "In six days, I learned more about marine mammals than I learned in years of veterinary school. It has done a great service not only to inspectors and marine mammals, but to the industry as well."

Janna Evans

# Tracking the Flight of Shiny Blackbirds

## Floor-wax on blackbirds?

Believe it or not, floor wax was used in an Animal Damage Control project at the Denver Wildlife Research Center to track the population movement of migrating birds.

Blackbirds in North and South Dakota often feed on nearby sunflower fields. Sunflower production is a \$300-400 million industry in the U.S., and crop losses caused by blackbirds have been estimated at \$9-12 million annually.

To track the birds, project researchers developed a marking formulation known informally as "magic marker," using a clear acrylic adhesive (a kind of floor wax) combined with anti-freeze, defoamer, wetting agents, water and a fluorescent marking material with a talcum powder-like consistency.

## Using a "Magic Marker"

Small planes and helicopters then sprayed this "magic marker" onto blackbird roosts. Later, a

small percentage of the birds were captured and the marker was "read" under ultra-violet light to provide data on flight patterns, time and length of migration.

DWRC researchers Brad Johns and Ed Knittle then correlated this information with bird damage to crops, especially to corn and sunflowers in the Upper Midwest, where most of the blackbird tracking took place.

## Progress Continues

The project is continuing through the activities of researcher George Linz at North Dakota State University in Fargo, N.D. According to Linz, the project focuses on reducing bird damage to sunflower crops using environmentally safe methods. Mechanical scare devices have been used, as well as a chemical repellent. Certain farming practices that can reduce damage—such as having all farmers in an area coordinate their planting times—have also been used successfully to reduce migrating bird damage.



DWRC staffers (left to right) Ed Knittle, Brad Johns and John Cummings mix ingredients to prepare blackbird marking spray in Benson, Minn. (Photo by James E. Davis)

Linz also uses banding and color tagging to track the migrating birds, since the fluorescent marker lasts for only one season and disappears when the birds lose their feathers.

-Pat El-Hinnaway

# S&T In the Carolinas: Mowing the Witchweed Challenge Down to Size

Let's say you're faced with ten square miles of grass to cut—and you're handed a pair of scissors. Would it make a difference if someone got you a riding lawn mower?

The Methods Development Center in Whiteville, N.C., headed by Bob Eplee (that's Robert E. Lee with a 'P', he explains), has been advancing operational strategies for the witchweed eradication program from a scissors-stage technology to a riding-mower mode. In the process, 75 percent of the 400,000 originally infested acres have been freed of this serious parasite of corn, sorghum, rice and sugarcane.

"Eradicating witchweed is still a lot of work, but it's within our grasp, and much of the credit is due to the advances made by the Methods Development group," says Haywood Cox, PPQ program manager for the witchweed eradication effort.

Now part of APHIS' Science and Technology, the Whiteville facility and the Dillon Test Farm in Little Rock, S.C., work to find innovative solutions to field problems in programs for witchweed, noxious weeds, golden nematode and imported fire ant. "We sift research findings for practical solutions to field problems," says Randy Westbrook, research agronomist at the Whiteville center. "Sometimes we adapt promising ideas for APHIS' special needs, other times we invent solutions of our own."

## Starting at Square One

Although witchweed and its relatives are widely scattered across Asia and Africa, it was new to the United States in 1956 and scientists hadn't a clue how to control it. "About all we knew about witchweed when Congress passed legislation to eradicate it was that it could destroy corn and that we didn't want it," says Eplee.

The entire discipline of weed science was in its infancy, he says. In fact, the one chemical control in existence had been found by accident when a researcher was screening a substance called 2,4-D for insecticide potential. His notes read, "Insects doing fine, plants dead."

## Testing the New Technology

When the war on witchweed began, 2,4-D—carried by backpack and sprayed by hand—was state-of-the-art weed control. In the 1960s the number of herbicides burgeoned. The Dillon Test Farm, headed by Marion Langston, tested the haystack of possibilities for chemicals useful to the eradication effort. One herbicide revolutionized witchweed control.

Now called "Goal," it was just RH2915 when Langston's group first tested it. The Dillon group was the first to identify the usefulness of this material and worked with the company to get it approved.

Not only is witchweed extremely susceptible to Goal but this herbicide keeps working. "With 2,4-D and the other contact herbicides, you sprayed the weeds, they went away for 10 days and then you had to spray again," said Langston. "But Goal has a chemical formulation that makes it evaporate very slowly, so that it keeps controlling weeds most of the season."

Cutting the spray schedule from every two weeks to once or twice a season not only cuts the amount of chemical used, but the amount of time, labor, equipment and fuel used to apply it. "Obviously, we can undertake more acres for the same amount of money with this tool at our disposal," said Langston.

## Innovative Answers

But while killing plants is important, it's the potential plants—billions of microscopic seeds that accumulate in the soil over decades—that present a challenge. How do you kill a seed—a plant that isn't even there yet?

In 1967, the Whiteville team made a breakthrough in seed destruction technology. Called the "bury and glue principle," the method is a safe, effective way of fumigating large fields with methyl bromide. "You inject the gas into the soil where it spreads evenly throughout, trickling into the seeds' tiny pores and killing them," says Rebecca Norris, laboratory technician in Whiteville. "The trick is in



Workers at the Science and Technology facility in Whiteville, N.C., securely bury one end of plastic sheathing before rolling it out and gluing it to the adjacent strip. The method, developed at Whiteville, allowed large tracts of soil to be fumigated for the first time. Today it is the method of choice in industry. (Photo by Rebecca Norris)

keeping large fields covered with plastic to prevent the gas from escaping."

Within a month after Methods developed a system for gluing tractor-wide swaths together, two private companies had adopted the methodology. "We've fine-tuned the system several times—and it's still the method of choice throughout the commercial industry," Eplee says proudly.

### **Slaying the Sleeping Seeds**

But important as it is, fumigation is costly and only justifiable in select circumstances. To flush witchweed seeds from the soil more economically, a different strategy is required.

"The problem," explains Perry Lockerman, who has worked with

the program in the field since 1962, "is that the seeds sit in the soil and germinate at their leisure. If you wait for nature to produce the plant, it can take 10 years or more."

The answer turns out to be ethylene, a natural plant hormone given off by ripening fruits and flowers. When injected underground, ethylene sends a "wake-up call" to all the properly conditioned seeds sleeping in the soil, causing them to germinate. But with no host present for the witchweed to attack, it's a short day for the parasitic plant.

Depending on whom you ask, the list of Methods' most important contributions differs slightly—finding chemicals to use in crops other than corn, various equipment modifications or inventions, the

point system for releasing quarantined counties, surveying fields by horseback—but the most significant contribution mentioned over and over by everyone is ethylene.

Perhaps the science and technology contribution to the program can best be summarized in terms of the time it now takes to definitively clear witchweed from a field, farm or county. "In 1960 we could get the job done but it meant an interminable process of surveying and spraying," says Lockerman. "Today with the arsenal of tools available and the knowledge and dedication to implement them, the 10-year timetable for eradicating a site has been telescoped into three years."

-Anita Brown

## **APHIS Mail Award Given to Client Agency**

The Federal Grain Inspection Service has been honored with a special APHIS award for improving its mail system. Thanks to the sophisticated postal metering equipment installed in every field office, FGIS now has 100 percent direct accountability of official mail.

According to Jerry Mainer, mail manager and records officer for Administrative Services Division, "Direct accountability means you know exactly how much you're spending on mail services. We used to do a random sampling once a year for a two-week period, but that gave us only a rough estimate of how much we were spending. Furthermore, the Postal Service used that figure in computing how much we were charged."

According to Gary Wilson, previous Director of the APHIS Administrative Services Division, the Mail Management Award has always been presented within APHIS. "This is the first time we gave this honor to another agency," he says.

"This achievement has significantly enhanced the APHIS/FGIS mail management program. In fact, FGIS has already cut its mailing costs by 12 percent."

Wilson presented the award to W. Kirk Miller, FGIS Administrator. Sharing in the award was Richard F. Pforr, Chief of the FGIS Equipment Branch, who coordinated the purchase and installation of the postal meters.

According to Mainer, ASD provides mail management services to four other agencies in addition to APHIS and FGIS: Office of Transportation, Packers and Stockyards Administration, Agricultural Cooperative Service, and Agricultural Marketing Service.

Mainer says ASD's next goal is to get postal meters installed in all of the APHIS field offices.

"We're hoping to accomplish this within the next two years," he says. "APHIS is spending about \$3 million per year on mail services. We'd realize substantial savings by going to the metering system. Eighty-five percent of the Department of Agriculture now uses metered mail. It just makes good business sense."

-Caree Lawrence

## **Assailant of APHIS Employee Gets Fine, Jail Sentence**

Jerry Rushing, a veteran character actor, received a 21-month jail sentence in October 1988 and was fined \$5,000 for assaulting a federal agriculture agent.

In this case, the agent was APHIS investigator Page Allen Epple, based in Raleigh, N.C.

Rushing, who owns a hunting lodge in Taylorsville, N.C., was convicted of the charge on August 17, 1988, by a U.S. District Court in Statesville, N.C.

### **Compliance Investigators Threatened**

An investigation of the case by USDA's Office of Inspector General revealed that Epple and Albert Manley Eatmon, a livestock investigation supervisor for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, contacted Rushing at his residence to question him about some diseased hogs that Rushing sold to a New York hog farmer.

According to the OIG report, Rushing became angry during the

conversation, struck Eatmon in the face with his fist and then held both Epple and Eatmon at gunpoint for approximately 30 minutes.

Throughout this time, the report stated, Rushing verbally threatened both persons several times.

### **Punishment for Federal Offense**

"This case serves as a reminder that any type of assault on APHIS field personnel while they are performing their official duties is a (continued on page 24)

# Sherlock Holmes Would Have Been Proud

PPQ inspectors at Seattle's Sea-Tac International Airport recently uncovered a smuggling attempt that may have stumped even the legendary Sherlock Holmes. Two passengers from Taiwan presented the U.S. Customs official with a commercial invoice for two new motorcycle tires. X-rays by Customs revealed small balloon-shaped objects in one tire and long cigar-shaped objects in the other.

"When the plastic wrapping was removed from the tires, they ap-

peared to be brand new, complete with inner tubes," said John Burnett, Officer in Charge at Seattle. "Upon removing the inner tubes, our inspector discovered a small incision in each one."

The tube with cigar-shaped objects was opened first and revealed fresh pork sausage, while the small balloon-shaped objects in the other tube turned out to be fresh litchi fruit. The passengers received a \$50 fine apiece for their efforts and the fruit and meat were confiscated.

"This was one of the most creative smuggling attempts we've uncovered at Sea-Tac International Airport," said Burnett. "We've seen many others—false labeling of cans containing meat, hiding fruit inside plastic bags wrapped in clothing, even concealing prohibited fruit inside food items that are allowed."

Added Burnett, "Whoever planned this case showed a great amount of foresight, creativity and ingenuity, but was foiled again by

## VS Commends Private-Practice Vets for Vigilance Against "Timebombs of Disease"

**Viscerotropic Velogenic Newcastle Disease** is not the latest in tongue twisters. Better known as VVND or exotic Newcastle, it's a highly contagious avian disease feared by poultry producers and pet bird dealers alike.

According to M.A. Mixson, head of Veterinary Services' Emergency Programs Staff, the last major outbreak of VVND, from 1971-74, resulted in the depopulation of nearly 12 million birds in southern California poultry flocks and cost taxpayers \$56 million to eradicate. The outbreak was later traced back to parrots which had been brought into the country, proving for the first time that exotic Newcastle could be transmitted from pet birds to poultry.

To safeguard the nation's poultry, APHIS imposed regulations in March 1972 calling for imported parrots and related birds to undergo a minimum 30-day quarantine to ensure that they are free of VVND and other diseases.

### Smuggled Birds Pose Threat

An estimated 25,000 birds annually are smuggled into the United States, usually via the Mexican border. Such birds may show no symptoms and still carry the contagious VVND virus. These so-called "timebombs of disease" could wreak havoc on the U.S. caged bird and poultry industries.

If exotic Newcastle disease became established in this country, it could cost the poultry industry some \$230 million a year.

and drive up the cost of poultry and eggs," says Mixson.

Consumers and pet bird dealers are frequently reminded to be suspicious of "bargain" birds that may introduce this deadly disease into the country. But private-practice veterinarians, who diagnose and treat sick birds, often provide the tip-off that leads to traceback and containment of a VVND outbreak.

### Alert Vets Suspect Fowl Play

Such was the case with five veterinarians whose quick actions in 1988 helped eliminate a potential VVND threat. Annelise Spira of Los Angeles, Calif., William Mears of Las Vegas, Nev., James Botsford of Brighton, Mich., Peter Sakas of Niles, Ill., and James Koshmann of El Paso, Tex., have been com-

mended by APHIS for their efforts in keeping out foreign animal diseases.

All five of the veterinarians treated Amazon parrots that were so ill that they died shortly afterward or had to be euthanized. The birds' symptoms—weakness, inability to walk or stand, loss of breath, and dehydration—indicated the possibility of VVND. The veterinarian in each case contacted VS personnel, took tissue samples from the dead birds, and had the samples sent to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa, where they were confirmed for VVND.

Mixson said it was later discovered that all the parrots had been purchased from street vendors or at bird-swap meets. At least one was believed to have been purchased in Mexico and brought into the United

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Walter Howe, El Paso port veterinarian (right), presents a certificate of appreciation to veterinarian James Koshmann for helping to prevent a possible outbreak of VVND.

the great job being done by our PPQ inspectors."

Last year, 650,000 passengers passed through Sea-Tac International, and it's growing at a rate of ten percent each year. Handling flights from Europe, Asia, and Mexico, the PPQ inspection station at Sea-Tac is the fifth largest in the country.

-Caree Lawrence

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**Border Produce,**  
continued from page 1

The PPQ-Border Patrol teams stopped most fruit smugglers along the fenced-in river area, but they also found them selling fruit door-to-door in nearby neighborhoods, on street corners, and in markets. Smugglers were easily spotted with large crates and 50-pound white plastic bags used to carry the produce.

"The concept behind the FIOs was to create a federal team with a vested interest in stopping illegal aliens, for whatever reasons," Vigil said. "Border Patrol stopped them for illegally entering the United States, and PPQ confiscated their fruits and vegetables."

The four two-week FIOs, the last of which ended in September, yielded 56,397 pounds of fruits and vegetables. Hundreds of Mexican fruit fly larvae were found in the confiscated produce, not to mention avocado weevils and other serious pests.

"The tonnage collected is very impressive. By the end of the last operation, the number of fruit smugglers still trying their luck had fallen drastically," Vigil said. "People who used to smuggle hundreds of pounds of fruit a day realized they were losing too much money trying to get past our defenses. They had to do other things for money. One guy who was a regular a few months ago told me he's selling popsicles now."

There are no definite plans to conduct FIOs in other border towns, but FIOs—as designed and operated by PPQ in El Paso—have proven their effectiveness in protecting U.S. agriculture from foreign pests and diseases.

Janna Evans



El Paso PPQ officer Frank Davis takes a moment from inspecting for fruit flies and other pests to pose for INSIDE APHIS. The confiscated produce in the foreground includes (L-R) limes, mangoes, nopales (sliced cactus), avocados, peppers and potted gardenias. (photo by Marlene Stinson)

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## Brucellosis Testing Device

Although this beef cow doesn't look very appreciative, the electronic device in Ted Black's hand may save that cow from some unnecessary testing. Black, a computer specialist at the National Center for Animal Health Information Systems in Fort Collins, Colo., recently conducted a field trial of the hand-held data entry device. According to APHIS Central Region Epidemiologist Bob Sanders, after Black enters into his machine such data as cow ID, sex, age, breed, vaccination status and blood specimen tube number, the device promptly indicates the cow's testing status. This technology can help avoid problems caused by illegible entries in animal disease eradication test charts and uncertainties about the completeness of herd tests. (Photo by Bob Sanders)



# Good Marks for the First Graduates of PPQ's New Canine Training Centers

If you walk through the international arrivals area in six U.S. airports, you may see a beagle working alongside a PPQ officer to detect hidden meat or fruit in passenger baggage.

Travelers often express disbelief when told that the dog has smelled a forbidden item inside a closed bag and "told" the handler. But when the bag is taken to an inspection area and opened, nine chances out of 10 the dog turns out to have made a hit.

How do the nine teams now working in USDA's Beagle Brigade get to be that good at their job? They go to school, according to Roy Cole, PPQ staff officer and Beagle Brigade coordinator.

## Early Graduates Need Further Training

Until June 1987, that meant a training center operated by the Department of Defense at Lackland Air Force Base, just outside San Antonio, Tex.

But while the Air Force center was good at training dogs for detection purposes, PPQ officials found that its agricultural graduates needed a lot of "post-graduate" training. The major skill beagles had to learn was to work quietly and unobtrusively amid the chaos of milling, often irritable passengers trying to find their luggage after arriving from a trip overseas.

"The 'post-graduate' work took about two months and, in fact, required unlearning some habits the dogs had acquired at the Air Force school," said Cole. "The trainers that PPQ hired to work with our dog teams said they'd just as soon train new recruits, both human and canine, right from the beginning."

## PPQ Opens Canine Training Centers

In June 1987, the PPQ trainers won their point—and began operating not just one, but two canine training centers, one on each coast. This is less costly and more practical than shuttling dogs and handlers across the country to go to school, according to Cole.

One school operates in a 60-foot trailer located on USDA land near

Miami, Fla.; the other operates in a converted boarding house in Livermore, Calif., near San Francisco. Dogs are carefully selected by PPQ's two "headmasters," Mel Robles from Livermore and Cal Brannaka from Miami. They look for young, easy-to-manage dogs that have been raised by breeders specializing in working dogs.

They are equally selective about handlers, who are expected to be knowledgeable about caring for and working with sensitive animals.

Dogs begin training five weeks before their handlers join the class. They learn basic commands and are selectively trained to respond to five target odors—pork, beef, citrus, apple and mango. After the handlers join their dogs, the two spend another six weeks learning to operate as a team. Handlers get lessons in canine health and behavior and their dogs learn how to respond to signals and work around bags and baggage.

## Working for an Audience

Dog teams even get two days of training in meeting and demonstrating their work for reporters,

television cameras and travel groups. The friendly working dogs attract attention wherever they go, and PPQ turns this to good advantage in spreading the message that travelers should declare imported fruits and meats to protect American agriculture.

"We never use loud or forceful tactics in the training," Brannaka says. "Step by step, dogs and handlers learn what's required, and the handlers reward the dogs for every good habit they develop."

## Mastering the Routine

This is the routine dog teams must master: When planes arrive, the beagles move quickly among the arriving passengers and their baggage, sniffing the air for the scent of fruit or meat. If they detect something, they sit down and look up at their handlers. The handlers praise them, give them small treats, and tag the baggage. Then they immediately move on to other bags and other passengers.

The first training classes included two teams at Livermore, which graduated in December

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In San Francisco Mike Simon shows two young travelers how a detector dog works. This beagle is "Sherlock," who is now in Los Angeles.

# EEO Honors

APHIS recognized two employees with its honorary Administrator's EEO Award for achieving "outstanding results through unusu-

ally effective leadership, skill, imagination, innovation and perseverance in extending equal opportunity to women and men in government

activities." Recipients were honored during the APHIS awards ceremony in June.

## Pam Stanley, Processing Section, FSO

Pamela K. Stanley, Supervisory Personnel Management Specialist of FSO's Processing Section, was recognized for her two years of quality leadership of this new unit in the midst of high turnover and low morale.

A large percentage of Stanley's group are entry-level employees, and she motivates them by providing on-the-job training opportunities. She encourages her employees' participation in the FSO's EEO Advisory Committee and Quality committees, where they develop written and oral communication skills. Her group has created a desk manual, and almost all of the employees in the Processing Section have written at least one chapter in it. Stanley also developed a campaign to reduce the Processing Section's error rate. With it she developed a visual display that illustrated the error rate as it declined significantly over a period of time.

She has instituted the annual use of Individual Development



Plans, and she worked with employees quarterly to design goals and evaluate progress.

Stanley has used special handicapped, veteran, and stay-in-school hiring authorities to recruit new employees. She has sponsored all-

employee presentations on epilepsy and deaf awareness, and she has brought in deaf interpreters for trainings and FSO functions.

Stanley won the FSO's Leadership award in 1988.

## Dwight LeBlanc, ADC State Director, Louisiana

APHIS and the Fish and Wildlife Service have a cooperative agreement to identify, assist and encourage minority students at Grambling State University with an interest in a wildlife career. Through his contacts with ADC directors in states adjacent to him, as well as other promotional activities, Louisiana State ADC Director Dwight LeBlanc has been an outstanding force in implementing that agreement.

He hired one Grambling student to help APHIS-ADC biologists in Louisiana in 1988 and arranged for two more in 1989. Students were also hired to work in ADC offices in Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee because of his efforts. ADC

(Continued on page 23)



# APHIS Award Winners

## **Janet Nelson, Administrative Support Technician, Veterinary Biologics Field Office (VBFO), Ames, Iowa**

The VBFO had just been reorganized from several regional offices when Janet Nelson began working there as Secretary in 1985. In addition to her secretarial duties, she assumed the responsibilities of the vacant administrative officer position and set up office procedures for budget, procurement, personnel and travel.

Nelson helped write position descriptions for the 20 employees

currently at the VBFO office—up from the original four who moved into the new office. She developed the budget and a tracking procedure for salaries, travel and expenses. She trained personnel in office procedures, word processing and secretarial skills.

For six months Nelson also took on the duties of a vacant program specialist position, which included establishing and maintaining tracking systems for inspections, complaints and investigations of firms manufacturing veterinary biologics products.

Janet Nelson was voted Secretary of the Year by her local chapter of Professional Secretaries International in 1986.

"From the beginning Janet has contributed significantly in organizing a new office with no previous history or records," according to D.C. Randall, Deputy Director of the VBFO. "She has shown exceptional initiative and ability. The Department's Superior Service award is an appropriate recognition of her worth to the agency."



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### **Don Hawthorne, Texas State Director for ADC, San Antonio, Texas**

A natural aptitude for leadership enabled Don Hawthorne to supervise the largest state ADC program in APHIS to increase its efficiency and public acceptance. Hawthorne is now Director of the ADC Western Region, but he was recognized by the Department for his work in Texas supervising 205 employees and managing a combined Federal and state budget of more than \$5 million.

In his ADC role there he also headed a state agency, the Texas Rodent and Predatory Animal Control Service. Through successful negotiations with various state governing bodies, Hawthorne increased the amount of cooperative funding to 60 percent of his

overall budget. His ability to build trust with peers allowed him to develop excellent relationships with members of Federal and state agencies, the Texas livestock and citrus industries and farm associations. He served as Chairman of the national ADC policy committee and on the Resource Advisory Group for the USDA-APHIS transition team.

Hawthorne built the same trust with subordinates, and he developed a staff that has become "a major source of candidates for supervisory positions in other states," according to ADC Acting Deputy Administrator Bobby Acord. In 1986 half of the attendees of the ADC Supervisory Training Program were from Texas. He established an EEO coordinator and EEO counselors in the state ADC program, and he actively recruited from colleges and universities with predominant minority

populations. Over 25 percent of his program employees are women and minorities.

Hawthorne also developed an exhibit for use at agricultural fairs, shows and other gatherings; computerized the tracking of property; implemented audiometric testing for employees working around hearing hazards and the use of hearing protection for them; developed consensus for moving an ADC office to an area of high program priority; and expanded the cost-effective use of fixed-wing aircraft for hunting in certain areas.

"Don has established high standards with his excellent cooperative relationships and through the development of reliable monetary and human resources," Acord said. "His programs are efficient and biologically sound. He is a valuable asset to USDA."



## APHIS Award Winners (continued)

### George O. Winegar, Senior Staff Veterinarian, Veterinary Services, Import-Export Animals Staff, Hyattsville, MD

Negotiations of animal export protocols with Algeria, Tunisia and Turkey have been worth over \$300 million in U.S. exports, a sizable enough reason for recognizing George Winegar for Departmental honor.

But that is just part of what Winegar has done lately. He was also responsible for working out the negotiations on animal health requirements that allowed the U.S. to import the now-famous Chinese pigs for research and breeding, an

effort that is expected to save millions of dollars a year for the American swine industry.

Winegar developed a U.S. response to the bovine health certification requirements of these Middle Eastern countries and then took part in negotiating the proposed changes with the respective government officials. His efforts persuaded officials to change their positions on such health issues as vaccinations for bovine rhinotracheitis, foot-and-mouth disease and brucellosis. As a consequence, the U.S. exported over 30,000 dairy cattle available through the USDA's Export Enhancement Program and the Dairy Termination Program.

In the case of the People's Republic of China Winegar worked with

Madame Liu, Chief Animal Health Officer, to establish protocols that allowed the U.S. to import three breeds of pigs that are known to produce 13 to 16 pigs per litter. The project was shared jointly with the Agricultural Research Service.

Winegar has also worked on animal health proposals with Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bermuda, Brazil, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Taiwan and the Soviet Union.

Said Deputy Administrator Lonnie King, "In China, he brought his knowledge of Chinese customs and his negotiating competence and style to bear to get the job done. This was no small task given Madame Liu's reputation as a tough negotiator. His efforts are outstanding."



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## **Terry Medley, Director, Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection, Hyattsville, MD**

Even before Terry Medley became Acting Director of the new Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection unit, he was a part of putting the U.S. Department of Agriculture "on the map" of biotechnology regulations. As senior attorney for plant protection and quarantine for the Department's Office of the General Counsel, he was recognized for his work on matters arising under the animal and plant quarantine laws.

Medley's leadership enabled APHIS to become the first Federal agency, in 1987, to issue a final rule regulating certain genetically

engineered organisms—in this case, products for agricultural use. The resulting program has been recognized for facilitating the competitive edge of the U.S. biotechnology industry as well as safeguarding the environment, such that several foreign countries and states have considered it for their own use.

Medley has used "creative and resourceful interpretation" of APHIS authority, as outlined in the Federal Plant Pest Act, to assert regulatory authority over the release into the environment of new, genetically engineered organisms that may be plant pests. According to Administrator James Glosser, "This assertion of regulatory authority has not been challenged and is the centerpiece of the APHIS regulatory program concerning this kind of

genetically engineered organism."

Medley is also responsible for creating procedures for APHIS to provide States with notification and review, handle confidential business information, issue a single limited permit for multiple interstate movements and process applications within self-imposed time limits.

"Because of his efforts," Glosser said, "genetically engineered organisms are being regulated, not according to the process by which they are produced, but according to the risks they present. Terry Medley's leadership in this regard has generated considerable goodwill and respect for APHIS."



# APHIS Award Winners (continued)

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## San Juan Port Review Panel, PPQ Southeastern Region, Hato Rey, PR

PPQ had been experiencing labor problems at the Port of San Juan for several years. Though a variety of employee complaints had been addressed, the same issues kept resurfacing.

In 1986, APHIS management brought together diverse members of the Puerto Rican workforce in an eight-member panel designed to identify problems, discuss issues, and provide suggestions for improvement.

The panel consisted of four managers and four representatives of the bargaining unit (union members and other workers). Its fact-finding effort included a 50-page questionnaire, sent to all PPQ employees in the Puerto Rican port.

The panel operated confidentially and strove to create consensus. It was helped by two facilitators, a

private contractor from San Juan, Luis Morales, and Dan Stone, Chief of Organization Development with HRD. Using information from the completed surveys to develop a 137-page report, the team submitted 120 recommendations to PPQ management.

"The recommendations were very broad in scope but focused on improving employees' ability to do their jobs," said Michael Wright, assistant regional director for the southeastern region and chairperson of the panel. "Factors affecting on-the-job effectiveness, like the availability of working telephones, hand-held radios and vehicles, were all addressed." Proposals also addressed long-term goals, such as team building, improving airline relations, providing free employee parking, and changing the way the award system worked.

Management accepted all but two of the recommendations and has

been implementing changes ever since. As a result, grievances have dropped dramatically.

According to Wright, pest interceptions in San Juan's port increased by 24 percent in 1988, after communications among management, the union, and employees began improving. "The increase in interceptions can't be shown scientifically to be linked to changes in the Port, but improvements don't happen by themselves," he said.

The group was nominated for the Department's Distinguished Service award and was given an APHIS honor award "for employing innovative organization development techniques....resulting in improved resource management and program delivery systems." Named in the award were Stone, Panel Chairman Wright, and members Gonzalo Aran, Angel Bonilla, Norberto Gabriel, Edwin Garcia, Alba Sanchez and Carlos Vargas.

## Imperial Irrigation District Hydrilla Control Research Program El Centro, CA

Through irrigation, California's Imperial Valley had been changed from a desert with 3 inches of rainfall a year to a prime fruit- and vegetable-growing area with a \$3 to 4 billion agricultural economy. But the irrigation system that supports these half-million acres was threatened in 1977 by hydrilla, a prolific aquatic weed. Hydrilla's ability to choke canals, fill reservoirs, and otherwise block the free flow of water was notorious.

Managers of the irrigation system, as well as individual farmers, tried dredging and dragging canals and applying more than a dozen herbicides without meaningful results. They attempted biological control with experimental fish, but California environmental authorities were concerned that the white amur, or grass carp, would

dominate populations of game fish if a population was allowed to be established in the irrigation system.

In response, a unique technology was developed that allowed the sterilization of triploid white amurs by exposing fertile eggs to extremely high pressure. The resulting fish were healthy and provided biological control of the hydrilla, but they were sterile and would not leave behind an established population.

The Imperial Valley irrigation system stocked about 60,000 of these special fish in the fall of 1985. As of last year, 95 to 99 percent of the infestation had been eliminated. In 1988 the program built a facility to produce sufficient numbers of sterile triploid amurs.

The technology has been taken to a neighboring infestation in the irrigation system of the Mexicali Valley in Mexico, with comparable results. The information gained in this process will be used to control hydrilla across the U.S.

The cost of the biocontrol project was \$1.5 million, compared with

the \$10.1 million estimated in 1978 for control of hydrilla there. It works without the use of potentially harmful chemicals, and it prevents power outages from shut-down of the hydro-electric plant. And, to the point, it keeps water flowing through the desert.

The hydrilla project absorbed the efforts of many people, including employees of the California Departments of Food and Agriculture and of Fish and Game, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, the Mexican government, the Agricultural Research Service, the Imperial Irrigation District, and APHIS.

PPQ employees recognized with the Department's Distinguished Service award for "outstanding accomplishments in pioneering biological control of hydrilla" were Bob Eplee, Head of the Methods Development Lab in Whiteville, N.C.; Ted Boratynski, Supervisory PPQ Officer in El Centro, Cal.; and Nicholas Gutierrez, Supervisory PPQ Officer in Guatemala.

## **The USDA Locust Control Team, Office of International Cooperation and Development (OICD), Washington, DC**

In 1988 the Agency for International Development and the State Department turned to USDA for help with a crisis: Plagues of African desert locusts were swarming through 31 African and Middle Eastern countries, denuding the land and threatening economic disaster.

In a cooperative effort OICD worked with APHIS, the Forest Service, the Agricultural Research Service, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Bureau of Land Management and some states to free key domestic field staff swiftly and send them to Africa to

assist in a cooperative control program. By the end of 1988, nine million acres of high-value cropland and pasture had been treated with 25,000 gallons of EPA-approved pesticides by over 40 USDA specialists who were there for periods varying from two weeks to five months.

The logistics were difficult, with workers moving frequently to follow swarms while coping with scarcity of potable water and communications equipment, threats from the heat and diseases, physical isolation, language barriers and shortages of pesticides on site, all before the beginning of the rainy season, when heavy vehicle movement would become impossible.

OICD mentioned APHIS' international staff in particular in its "prompt and exceptional help in identifying personnel and arranging

for temporary assignments" and also for helping to procure the pesticide. APHIS employees made up the largest number of participants named in the Department's Distinguished Service award—13 of the 28 named.

Cited "for creative and resourceful cooperative response in providing critical technical assistance to African countries to control adverse effects of locust plague on food and crop production" were International Coordinator Scot Campbell and Deputy Coordinator Shannon Wilson; Airplane Pilot Billy Tanner; Supervisory PPQ Officers Robert Milam and Gary Smith; and PPQ Officers Donald Albright, Carl Castleton, Rob McChesney, Patricia McCroy, Timothy McNary, Joyce Okamura, Nathaniel Perry and Donald Wimmer.

## ***Beagle Brigade*** *continued from page 16)*

1987, and four teams at Miami, which graduated in August 1988. The trainers visited teams soon after graduation and worked with them for a week at their assigned airports to fine-tune the training.

## **Better Training, More Convenience**

"I was pleased," Brannaka says after visiting his graduates on the job. "The teams we trained were much more proficient in finding contraband and adapted much more quickly and easily to their duty stations than teams trained by the Air Force. Another advantage of doing training ourselves is that we can schedule it at our convenience, rather than fitting it into the class schedule of the Air Force." Brannaka says the training facilities have been upgraded and the teaching curriculum improved.

The training centers are currently developing four teams: handler Gary Lair and "Bill," who, subject to completion of training, will be working in Seattle; Daniel Rothman and "Kojak" for Los Angeles; Lourdes Ortega and "Molly" for Miami; and Gary Nelson and "Brandy" for Houston.

They will join nine handlers currently on the job: at JFK in New York, handler Hal Fingerman and beagle "Jackpot" and Debbie Perreira and "Peppa"; at Logan in Boston, Larry McMillen and "Sam"; in Los Angeles, Jim Webber and "Sherlock"; in Miami, Brannaka and "Charlie" and Sandra Seward and "Jessie"; at O'Hare in Chicago, Tommy Miller and "Sparky"; and in San Francisco, Mike Simon and "Dr. Watson" and Robles and "Barnaby."

-Amichai Heppner

## ***EEO Awards*** *continued from page 17*

offices in Indiana, Michigan and New Jersey were also interested in recruiting students from Grambling.

LeBlanc is recognized for his "excellent working relationship with the Grambling staff and his repeated contacts with the University's Project Coordinator," which have "ensured that wildlife students at Grambling and other historically black colleges are aware of opportunities with APHIS in the field of animal damage control."

## **Guard Dog**

*continued from page 1*

along with other traditional animal damage control techniques, such as trapping.

"We hope to promote a sound program of overall predator management," said Green, "one that will be useful to ADC field personnel as we work to incorporate the most effective and economically practical means of controlling animal damage into our activities."

## **Survey Results Favorable**

As a bridge between Green's original ARS project and today's ADC program, he and his colleagues also carried out a mail survey to canvass sheep producers on guarding dogs. Nearly 400 ranchers responded, reporting on over 760 dogs.

About three-quarters of those surveyed felt their dogs to be very effective, and over 80 percent stated that guarding dogs were an economic asset. This survey helped confirm ADC's conviction that guarding dogs offered an effective method to manage wild animal predation in sheep herds.

-*Pat El-Hinnawy*

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## **Private-Practice Vets**

*continued from page 14*

States without undergoing quarantine in a USDA facility.

## **APHIS Commends Action**

Because of their swift action in preventing transmission of exotic Newcastle disease, the veterinarians received letters of commendation signed by Dr. Glosser, along with USDA Certificates of Appreciation for a job well done.

"We commend these veterinarians for their ability to handle a disease situation that could have resulted in great losses to the U.S. poultry industry," says Mixson. "Without the cooperation of the practicing veterinarians, we in Veterinary Services would have an extremely difficult time controlling and eradicating foreign animal diseases."

-*Caree Lawrence*

## **Assailant**

*continued from page 13*

federal offense and can carry severe punishment," said Arthur J. ("Skip") Wilson, Assistant Deputy Administrator for Regulatory Enforcement. Wilson also praised the speedy handling of the case by OIG Supervisory Agent Glenn Parsons.

Rushing, who has acted in more than 30 films, was originally charged with assaulting a federal officer with a deadly weapon. The jury chose to convict him of the lesser offense of assaulting a federal officer.

-*Bonnie Aikman*

## **RE Goes Automated**

*continued from page 10*

NCAHIS handles system problems and training. The Animal Health Information Staff in Hyattsville maintains security and systems backup, and the RE staff addresses actual data entry and operations questions and concerns.

"The give-and-take required for the day-to-day operation of the CITS is a fine example of different staffs working in unison toward a defined goal," Wilson says. "We know that working together improves efficiency and saves money."

-*Guesta Glenn*

When you give blood  
you give another birthday,  
another anniversary,  
another talk with a friend,  
another laugh,  
another hug,  
another chance.



**American Red Cross**

Please give blood.

